

HARAMBEE FLAME!

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Afrikans are beautiful in our own right rather than at the expense of any other ethnic group. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural exchange is germane to human growth.

Editorial

In a recent edition of the ATLANTA JOURNAL/CONSTITUTION, a staff writer for that paper, John Blake, did a piece entitled "The Soul Patrol." In this article, Blake, an African, complains about African folks who chide Sisters and Brothers for not being "black enough," who accuse them of being Uncle Toms, who attack them as being traitors, etc. when these Sisters and Brothers don't measure up to the "Soul Patrol"'s definition of what "blackness" is. He cites some examples of this: African college freshmen being attacked for dressing and talking white, an African man's plans to marry a Caucasian woman being foiled by pressure from his African friends, Spike Lee speaking of Clarence Thomas as a "fried-chicken-eating Negro," etc. Blake concludes that "...the persistent problems black people face today...require creative solutions and vigorous debate. That can't happen in an environment where black people are afraid to speak their minds. But the most dangerous aspect of the Soul Patrol is the squashing of black people's individuality."

At the basis of Blake's piece is something on the order of "Live and let live." From this flows the idea that African people, like any other people, ought to be able to think and say what we wish. On the surface, this live-and-let-live philosophy would seem to be an admirable one. But what kind of surface are we talking about? The surface of unreality is what we're talking about. Were it the case that we lived in a society, in a world, in which racism was not the order of the day and in which we Africans in the United States of (occupied) America were not a subjugated minority, then we might be able to get away with a live-and-let-live philosophy. We might be able to tolerate African persons saying just any damned thing. But this is the REAL world. Blake tells us that the problems we face require creative solutions and vigorous debate. He couldn't be more correct.

But he wants us to have this vigorous debate under condition of some kind of I'm-okay-you're-okay format. But when Clarence Thomas gives an opinion in a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in which he takes the position that a prisoner's Constitutional rights are not violated when he is brutalized by prison guards, unless he suffers some serious(?) injury, Clarence Thomas is NOT okay.

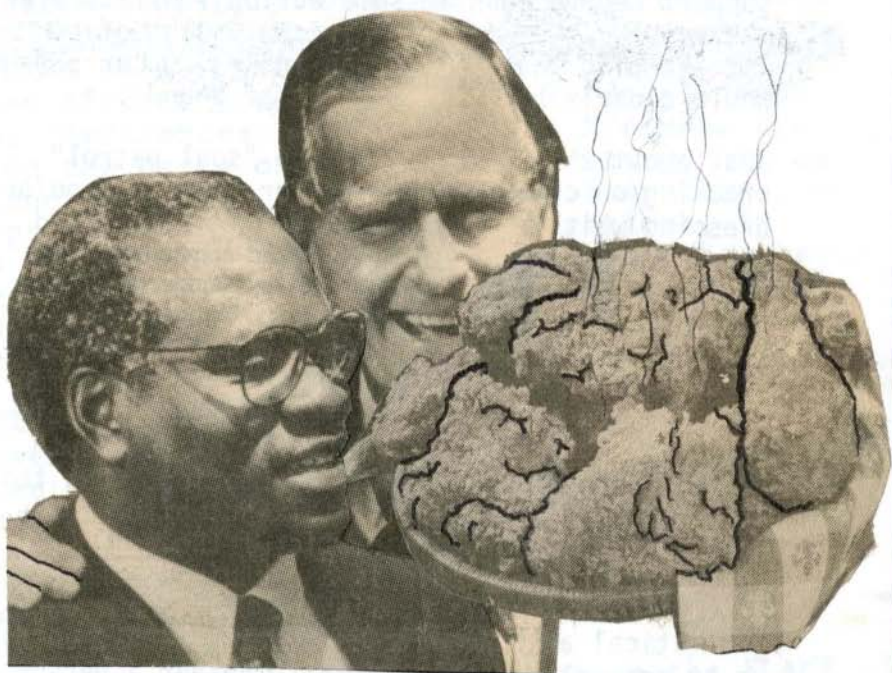
But, of course, neither Spike nor anyone else knew that Supreme Court nominee Thomas would, as a member of the Supremes, deliver a dissenting opinion in *Hudson vs. McMillian* and, in that opinion, state:

Today's expansion of the Cruel and Unusual Punishment Clause beyond all bounds of history and precedent is, I suspect, yet another manifestation of the pervasive view that the Federal Constitution must address all ills in our society. Abusive behavior by prison guards is deplorable conduct that properly evokes outrage and contempt. But that does not mean that it is invariably unconstitutional.

What did Spike Lee know? What did the rest of us know? We knew that Clarence Thomas was a supporter of a national Republican administration that had and has a domestic policy that is anti-African and anti-poor people generally and a foreign policy that is imperialist and racist; that Clarence Thomas expressed an attitude of insensitivity toward African people in this country who have not managed to "pull themselves up by their boot straps"--including his own sister; and that he was married to a Caucasian woman. Spike Lee could see quite well that Clarence Thomas had aligned himself, politically and socially, with the forces of Caucasian privilege and domination. His characterization of Thomas as a "fried-chicken-eating Negro" wasn't very polite. But when one from among us aligns him or herself with the forces by which we are oppressed, it is important that we make efforts to isolate this person and do whatever we can to insure that he or she cannot successfully come among us and present him or her self as our friend, as someone who can be trusted.

But let's return to Blake's expression of the belief that our problems require vigorous debate. We would be grand idiots not to share this belief. And it is obvious that there *can't* be vigorous debate unless there are differing ideas. For example, in the area of politics, there are those among us who believe participation in the Democratic Party is the way for us to go, those who believe that some of us need to be active in the Republican Party so that the Democratic Party won't be able to take our support for granted, those of us who take the position that neither

the Democrats nor the Republicans provide us with effective vehicles and that we would be better served by establishing our own political party, those who believe that there is no point in our continuing to be involved in electoral politics at all. There are other differing ideas in politics. And we ought to be mature enough to be willing to listen to these ideas and assess their relative merits.



However, the critical nature of our situation demands that we distinguish between the fact that a particular African has an idea that differs from an idea we might have and the fact that an African actively supports and/or is involved in a policy or activity that is clearly opposed to our collective interests. If, for instance, an African person believes in and espouses racial integration, he or she certainly has a right to that belief and espousal. But if such a person acts as an agent for some Caucasian-run group or organization to prevent a group of African folks from establishing a school or other institution designed for and to be administered over by African folks, that person had earned a characterization as a traitor. If an

African person is registered as Republican, that is his or her right to be so registered. He or she might have legitimate reasons for that. And, besides, the Republican Party is no more or less fundamentally concerned about the interests of African people than is the Democratic Party. But if that African man or woman were to urge us to support George Bush in some action - military or otherwise - by which the African nation of Libya, for example, would suffer an injury, he or she would clearly have stepped out of bounds.

What about this business of the "soul patrol" cracking on certain Africans for "talking and/or dressing white"? It used to be commonly heard among Africans in this country that Caucasians (businessmen and politicians in particular) "be talking out the sides of they mouths." This is not something we made up. Nor was this just figurative speech. Watch Caucasian businessmen and politicians. Many of them do actually deliver their words out of one corner of the mouth. And some Africans ape this affectation. But this is just one piece of this "talking white" business. A common characteristic of the speech patterns of African people is a certain rhythmic quality. It is this quality--even without our grammatical and phonetic adaptations--that enables us to commonly be able to tell whether a person we are talking with over the phone is an African. We don't know what Blake's "soul patrol" means by "talking white" because he doesn't tell us. But we can frequently, if not most all the time, tell when a Brother or Sister is employing an affectation in order to sound "proper" or "professional." And we know that many of our Brothers and Sisters--in the business world, in electronic media, and in politics especially--do equate sounding Caucasian with professionalism and/or proper speech. We understand that the employment of Caucasian/American English is generally required of people in the business world(including media). But does such a requirement explain Carole Simpson's mastery of the technique of sounding like an electronic voice-simulator?

EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization (parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, Inc.), is a pan-Africanist newsletter. The FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any distinctions between African people based solely on place of birth. References in the FLAME to Africans are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter "black" or other terms designating African people. This is our practice because we do not wish to diminish the integrity and authenticity of the articles we excerpt from.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa (p.k.a. D. Rice).

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 1200 words, though longer pieces will not be automatically rejected. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. We are looking for poems which address African folks' lives, the conditions we face, and our struggles to rise above those things which hinder us. Submitted poems should not sacrifice power and beauty for the sake of uniform rhythm and/or rhyme. Send submissions to the editor c/o HARAMBEE FLAME; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68542-2500.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

Nation Of Islam Gets Distribution Rights To

Kenyan-Developed Anti-AIDS Drug, Immunex

"...the Honorable Louis Farrakhan announced that the NOI has acquired exclusive distribution rights to the AIDS fighting drug Immunex, an oral alpha-interferon treatment developed in Kenya.

"Minister Farrakhan also announced that Minister Abdul Alim Muhammad, MD, would...begin a two-year leave from the ministry to focus on combatting AIDS...

"Dr. Muhammad and former *Final Call* Editor-in-Chief Abdul Wali Muhammad were sent to Kenya by Minister Farrakhan last year on a fact-finding tour regarding the drug Kemron.

"While there, the NOI representatives learned about Immunex. Both drugs have shown remarkable effects in relieving AIDS symptoms..."

-from "NOI Gets Exclusive Rights To Immunex," pages 3 and 17, March 23 THE FINAL CALL(Chicago, IL)

Georgia Jury Selection Case Addresses "Race"-

Based Exclusion of Juror Candidates

"...Prosecutors and defense lawyers from Georgia will appear before the (U.S. Supreme)court's nine justices in a case that will determine whether criminal defendants can use race as a reason to strikepotential jurors from hearing their cases.

"Prosecutors say the practice is discriminatory and violates the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Con-

stitution. Defense lawyers argue that the right of the defendant to select a jury of his peers outweighs all other courtroom interests...

"The case began in January 1990 when Myra Stevens and Jerry Collins, two Black customers of McCollums Dry Cleaners in Albany, became upset with the store's white owners, claiming a pair of jeans had been improperly altered.

"The customers say Scott and Joseph McCollum attacked them with baseball bats. The alleged assault, they claimed, was racially motivated...

"On the word of the customers, an Albany grand jury indicted the McCollums on aggravated assault charges.

"The trial was put on hold last year when prosecutors filed a motion asking that defense attorneys be barred from using their peremptory strikes to prevent Blacks from serving on the jury. Both the trial judge and the Georgia Supreme Court have since ruled that defendants' use of strikes should not be limited in any way..."

--from "Court To Hear Case That Could Change Jury Selection," page 2, March 7-13 THE ATLANTA VOICE

Gangster Rap, Negative Images Targeted At Forum

"A warning to the makers of gangster rap threatens a massive letter-writing campaign and boycott by Black activists and ministers who claim negative imagery should be blamed for crime in the city.

"The promise, aimed at record companies, television stations, film houses and individual recorders focuses on vulgar messages, violence, and the hype for expensive, unaffordable street wear...

"Rev. Valentine, along with Minister A.R. Jamal, Omar, Elombe Brath, and Correction Officer Eddie

Graham, told audiences at the Fort Greene Center in Brooklyn of responsible individuals who profit from the sale of products which contribute to crime...

"Activist Brath blame rappers with 'stupid money' for much of the negative images. He named groups like Niggahs With Attitude, Hoes With Attitudes, Bitches With Problems, Naughty By Nature and a host of rhyming record producers who he said are frustrated.

"The hatred infused by frustration explodes in the community in the form of violence', Brath explained..."

-from "Rappers Warned: Clean Up Lyrics Or Else,"
page 28, March 14 NEW YORK AMSTERDAM NEWS

Testimony, Reports On Police Torture In Chicago

"...Ten years after a cop rampage following the killing of two policemen, details of sadistic mayhem against black 'suspects' are emerging in public police department hearings. Beating, suffocation, shock treatment and mock execution were the means by which Commander Jon Burge and detectives Andrew Yucaitis and Patrick O'Hara extracted 'confessions' from their victims, some of whom have courageously testified at the hearings.
....

"Testifying on February 10, Andrew Wilson told how Commander Burge and others forced him to sign the 'confession' that was later used to convict him as a 'cop killer'. In February 1982, Chicago police took Wilson to the Brighton Park police station on the South Side, where they beat him bloody. Then they tied a plastic bag over his head, smashing him into a window when he fought for air. Later Burge and Yucaitis entered the room carrying a 'black box' with a hand crank and two dangling wires. 'Fun time' announced Burge,

as he attached the wires to Wilson's nostril and ear with alligator clips. When they turned the crank, an electrical current surged through Wilson's skull...

"Wilson's account is supported by other prisoners whose stories are remarkably similar...

"Forty-three people say that Burge and his cronies tortured them with electrical devices, including stun guns, cattle prods, an adapted hair dryer and the 'black box'. Forty of the victims were black.

"Police Superintendent LeRoy Martin and Democratic mayor Richard Daley suspended Burge, Yucaitis and O'Hara last fall only after their efforts to cover up for these criminal terrorists broke down...

"Together, Daley and Martin suppressed an internal police report on the torture for 15 months. Pried open last month by court order, the report documents the 'systematic' use of 'planned torture' on the South Side stretching back at least to 1973. It turns out that Martin, a black cop who was appointed superintendent by liberal black Democratic mayor Harold Washington in 1987, did a stint as commander of the Brighton Park station where the torture regularly occurred ..."

-from "Democrats Shield Police Sadists: Torture Town Chicago," page 15, March 20 WORKERS VANGUARD

South Africa Gets New(?) Friend In Former Soviet Union

"...Last month South Africa and Russia formally established full diplomatic ties (though at the same time the African National Congress said its office in Moscow would remain open). With the opening of official relations, Russian President Boris Yeltsin invited South African President F.W. de Klerk to visit Russia later this year. In delivering the invitation, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev opined that the two countries share the same objectives of improving democracy and human rights.

"Kozyrev was followed to Pretoria by a high-level Russian

trade delegation with an overwhelmingly military cast, including two senior air force officers and representatives of the military aerospace design industry...

It is likely that the first deal will involve the sale of MIG-29 engines for South Africa's own Mirage fighter fleet. But it is unlikely that cooperation will stop there. The two economies are somewhat symmetrical, and in the past there have been accords on pricing arrangements in minerals production...

"The ANC and the South African Communist Party have meanwhile condemned Kozyrev's visit to South Africa as premature, given the shaky progress of negotiations between Pretoria and the anti-apartheid forces..."

-from "Russia Opens 'Arms' To South Africa," page 15, March 18 THE GUARDIAN(N.Y., N.Y.)

African Population In Brazil May Be Victim Of Population-Control Scheme

"Brazil is one of the world's largest Black nations, with about three-quarters of the nation's population of 154 million claiming some African ancestry; and yet, few Black Brazilians have enjoyed substantive political power or economic advantages over their white countrymen..."

"Dr. Edialede Salgado do Nascimento, an obstetrician and gynecologist from Rio de Janeiro, claimed that several nations, including the United States, were using the degradation of Brazil's environment as a pretext for advocating population-control policies that specifically targeted the nation's Black population."

"Although she admitted that few statistics available on Brazil's population program were very reliable, Nascimento estimated that between 45 percent and 48 percent of all Brazilian women between 16 and 54 already had been sterilized involuntarily--forced, often without their knowledge, to undergo tubal ligations and other operations that end their child-bearing years. According to Nascimento, 60

(Cont. on page 12)

POETRY/STORY/GRAPHICS



percent of those women forced into sterility are Black.

"Nascimento cited a declassified U.S. National Security Council(NSC) document from 1976 as evidence of international complicity in population control for security, and not humanitarian, considerations. NSS-M200, drafted by the NSC under President Gerald R. Ford and signed by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and then-Director of the CIA George Bush, advocated the necessity of depopulating several developing nations--including Brazil, Bangladesh, Colombia, Nigeria and Turkey. The justification for the agenda, Nascimento noted, was that the U.S. government 'would have to spend too much money on armaments to control these countries' if those nations' demographic growth continued..."

-from 'Brazilian Blacks May Be Forced To Stem Population Growth," page 9, March 18-25 THE CITY SUN(Brooklyn, N.Y.)

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As to the question of "dressing white," generally when an African says that another African is "dressing white," he or she is talking about colors or color combinations, cuts of suits, etc. And sometimes this talk of someone "dressing white" can be based on some rather subtle and/or petty distinctions. Rarely, however, do we look upon the man's suit and tie as, in itself, "white dress." Rather, we make such a determination based on the color combinations suits and ties employ, how the lapels are cut, what the fabrics are, etc. But let's take ourselves to the Nebraska State Legislature, where the only African member of that body, Ernie Chambers, is never to be seen in a suit, with or without a tie. His typical attire consists of a pair of slacks and a t-shirt.

While some may interpret Ernie's refusal to wear a suit and tie as an act of nose-thumbing by Ernie toward his Caucasian colleagues, the fact is that Ernie understands the symbolic value of clothes. He realizes that the suit and tie are symbolic of the Caucasian Establishment, not only in this country but throughout the world. Thus, his wearing of the simple pants and t-shirt is a genuine (in his case) manifestation of his identification with common folks and rejection of the ruling elite and their cronies.

Not every African person who "talks white" or "dresses white" is consciously identifying with Caucasians. Not every African who prefers European classical music to African-American classical music ("jazz") or whose favorite author is a Caucasian or who likes Larry Bird as a basketball player more than Michael Jordan is "trying to be white." Likewise, not every African who wears traditional African clothing or who regularly quotes Malcolm X or who speaks African-American dialectical English has a genuine African orientation. We should not make snap-judgments about our Sisters and Brothers. You can't tell a sheep by its wool nor a wolf by its pelt. But how people talk and what they

say, how they dress, etc. are signs that can give us indications of their mind-sets. And these signs should not be ignored. If an African exhibits cultural traits which we associate with the dominant Caucasian society, we have to be curious about that because a cultural trait can be a sign of the acceptance of cultural values.

As we mentioned earlier, Blake complained that an African friend of his had plans of marrying a Caucasian woman but that his plans were foiled due to pressure from that man's African friends. Apparently Blake doesn't understand that there is a shortage in this country of African men such that any time an African man marries a non-African woman, some Sister is forced to have to share a Brother, to seek a non-African man, to look for a man-woman relationship with another woman, or to have no relationship at all. And because of the nature of "race"-based social hierarchy in the U.S., it is apparently far easier for an African man to have a front-door(unsecretive) relationship with a Caucasian woman than it is for an African woman to have such a relationship with a Caucasian man.

Worse, the question of whether an African marries a non-African(Caucasian in particular) is apparently not one of importance to Blake. It would be had he any inkling at all of the implications of our living in a racist country and being economically and otherwise expendable. If Blake had such an inkling, he would understand that an African person who has a Caucasian spouse must be seen by us as having divided loyalties. Furthermore, if Blake understood the dynamics of racism in this country, it would occur to him that the choosing (or being chosen) by Africans of Caucasian mates, in the context of the preponderance of the society's messages/images of Caucasian supremacy and African inferiority, poses the question to our children and youth: "Shouldn't I have one of those (Caucasians)?"

BACK IN TIME

The gold came from an area south of Ghana, called Wangara, which scholars place somewhere near the Senegal River. The Wangara people, who are related to the contemporary Fulani tribes of West Africa, never lost control of their gold to Ghana, but they needed to trade their gold for salt in order to survive. It might be said that the gold of Wangara was worth its weight in salt.

The salt did not come from Ghana but from the Sahara Desert and North Africa. The Arab traders of this region wanted gold as much as the Wangara wanted salt, but both had to pass through Ghana to trade. Ghana thus was in the perfect position to serve as middleman. As long as it kept both sides happy, it was able to control the trade.

The Wangara and the Arabs never came face to face in the trade. Instead they conducted "dumb barter," or silent trade. When the Arabs arrived in Ghana with their salt (as well as other goods, such as silk, copper, and metal pots), they placed it in piles along the river, with each trader marking his own pile of goods for identification. They then beat drums to announce the opening of the market.

The Wangara, upon hearing the drums, would sail up the river with their gold and ivory. In the meantime, the Arabs would retreat about a half day's journey away. When the Wangara arrived at the market, they would place their gold alongside each pile of goods, based on their estimation of its worth, and then withdraw.

If the Arabs were satisfied with the amount of gold left, they would sound the drums again, signaling the end of the barter. If they were not satisfied, they simply retreated once again and waited for the Wangara to increase their payment. This back-and-forth process continued until both sides were satisfied.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cockroach Publications is doing a monthly paper of anti-authoritarian poetry and needs submissions. They are especially looking for works by political prisoners and those who are aligned with them. Anti-authoritarian will not be defined rigidly.

Write to: Cockroach Publications
c/o Patrick
113 Elmwood Rd.
Oakville, Ont L6K 2A6

The National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty is preparing a 1992 campaign, called STOP IT, to "disarm the politicians of their death penalty rhetoric." For information, contact the NCADP, 1315 G St. NW, LL-B, Washington DC 20005.

The First World Conference of African Students will take place April 17-19, 1992 at the Society Hill Sheraton in Philadelphia, PA. The conference is aimed at college students and high school juniors and seniors...The purpose of the conference is to promote understanding and create linkages among African, African-Caribbean, and African-American students throughout the world. The educational sessions will range from "Great African Civilizations" to "The Rebirth of Malcolm X: A Phenomenon of the '90s" to "Choosing a Career from a Global Perspective." For conference registration information, contact: The Forerunners Institute, Inc., 1-800-831-9333.

The Judie Davis Marrow Donor Recruitment Program (JDMDRP) was organized in June, 1989, to find an unrelated donor for Judie Davis and other African American leukemia patients. The Program was named in honor of Judie Davis who lost her courageous battle to leukemia. A donor screening drive will be held on April 26th and May 3rd from 1-4 p.m. at St. John A.M.E. Church, 2224 No. 22nd St in Omaha. Donations. Donations are also being accepted. Please contact Beatrice Harris(3719 No. 24th St; Omaha, NE; 68110; 402/4515028) for further information.

